

GM 2

Statement from Dr. Loyal A. Mehrhoff to the Agriculture and Environment (AEN) Committee on the Endangered Species Recovery Committee:

1. Why do you wish to be a member of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee? I have been involved in the conservation of Hawaii's endangered plants and animals since 1991 and I would like to continue helping the State and others make good conservation decisions. I believe my experience and expertise will benefit the Endangered Species Recovery Committee (ESRC). The ESRC plays an important role in Hawaii's efforts to conserve threatened and endangered species by functioning as an advisory group to review and comment on the scientific and regulatory aspects of conservation. It is also a unique and innovative approach to reviewing Habitat Conservation Plans and Safe Harbor Agreements.
2. How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee? The purpose of the ESRC is to serve as a consultant to the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Department of Land and Natural Resources on matters relating to endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species. As one of the two designated field biologists on the ESRC with expertise in conservation biology, I would use my experience and expertise to provide thorough and timely reviews of projects, reasoned and scientifically supported recommendations, and fair and respectful treatment of projects. The people bringing proposed projects to the State and ESRC have invested large amounts of time and resources into those projects and they deserve a professional and timely review.
3. Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee, why do you believe that you're qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee. I have experience in field studies on Hawaiian endangered species as a Research Botanist with the Bishop Museum and then as a botanist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I have also done research on the differences between rare and common mainland species for a Master's degree and post-doctoral studies. I was the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey's Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center, here in Hawaii, where we did extensive research on endangered Hawaiian birds and plants. From a land management perspective, I was the Endangered Species Program Manager for endangered species in the National Park System and then became Chief of the National Park Service's Biological Resource Management Division. These experiences, in particular, were oriented towards undertaking actions to manage endangered species while still accomplishing the mission and objectives of the Parks. From a regulatory perspective, I have extensive experience with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managing endangered species programs that placed Hawaiian species on the list of endangered species, prepared recovery plans, and had responsibility for developing and implementing compliance monitoring for the Northwest Forest Plan that protected northern spotted owls and old-growth ecosystems in Washington, Oregon, and California. In 2014, I retired after five years as the Field Supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Island Fish and Wildlife Office in Honolulu, where we managed programs for over 500 endangered species in Hawaii and the Pacific. I currently work with a non-profit conservation organization, the Center for Biological Diversity as their Endangered Species Recovery Director. I have previously been on the ESRC with both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey.

4. What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service? I hope to help maintain the high quality of the ESRC's recommendations and advice to the State. In particular, I expect to focus on ensuring that recommendations are scientifically-based, consistent, fair, and focused on long-term successes.
5. Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Endangered Species Recovery Committee? I would describe myself as fair, science-based, and valuing transparency. I think it is very important to ensure that groups like the ESRC are respected as entities that make sound, logical recommendations based on facts, have clear and transparent processes that are fair to applicants, and that operate in a timely manner.
6. Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Endangered Species Recovery Committee? My time as the Field Supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office would be my most pertinent experience. This position required taking a big picture view of endangered species, while at the same time following legal and policy directives related to Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, and Section 7 consultations. This position required that decisions be science-based, legally defensible, fair, timely, and well documented.
7. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Endangered Species Recovery Committee? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest? I can foresee potential conflicts of interest, or appearances of conflicts of interest occurring. I do not know of a potential conflict at present, but I have been involved in many issues over the 25 plus years that I have worked on Hawaii's endangered species as a researcher, manager, or regulator. The vast majority of these issues will not have conflicts, but it is conceivable that a potential conflict could occur. If an appearance of a conflict materializes, I will discuss it in depth with the ESRC Chair to ensure that the integrity of the ESRC is maintained. If appropriate, or if requested, I will recuse myself from making recommendations on an issue or will agree to take any course of action the Chair requests of me.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Tuesday, August 29, 2017
1:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 2
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE
ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY COMMITTEE, GUBERNATORIAL
NOMINEE, LOYAL MEHRHOFF, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2019**

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) expresses its strong support for Governor's Message 2 on the confirmation of Dr. Loyal Mehrhoff as a gubernatorial appointed member of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee (ESRC).

Pursuant to Chapter 195D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the ESRC reviews all applications and proposals for habitat conservation plans, safe harbor agreements, and incidental take licenses. The ESRC makes recommendations, based on a full review of the best available scientific and other reliable data and at least one site visit to each property that is the subject of the proposed action, and in consideration of the cumulative impacts of the proposed action on the recovery potential of the endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species, to the Department and the Board of Land and Natural Resources as to whether they should be approved, amended, or rejected.

Dr. Mehrhoff's background is in endangered species listing, botany, recovery and consultation, as well as landscape conservation and climate change issues. He is currently the Endangered Species Recovery Director for the Center for Biological Diversity. Previously, Dr. Mehrhoff served as Field Supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Islands Office in Honolulu, Chief of the Biological Resources Management Division at the National Park Service in Fort Collins, Colorado, Center Director at the U.S. Geological Survey's Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center in Honolulu, and a Research Botanist at the Bishop Museum. Dr. Mehrhoff has exceptional regulatory and administrative knowledge that would greatly benefit the Committee, which makes him an ideal appointee for the ESRC. The Department strongly supports and recommends Dr. Mehrhoff's confirmation for the ESRC.

From: [Benton Pang, Ph.D.](#)
To: [AEN Testimony](#)
Subject: Support for GM2 8/29,2017 1:30 pm
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 1:47:14 PM

Testimony in support of Dr. Loyal Mehrhoff for the Endangered Species Recovery Committee.

Committee on Agriculture and Environment
GM2
August 29, 2017 at 1:30 pm

I support the appointment of Dr. Loyal Mehrhoff to the Endangered Species Recovery Committee. His experience in endangered species conservation, laws and policies is well suited for the position.

Sincerely,
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.